

MONTHLY NOTES
OF THE
Library Association
of the United Kingdom.

At the meeting on Friday, December 6, a paper will be read by Mr. ERNEST C. THOMAS, and Mr. H. B. WHEATLEY, Hon. Sec. of the Index Society, on "A Proposed Subject-Index to Bibliologies and Bibliographies."

We shall be glad to receive from our readers, statistics and other information relating to the libraries with which they are connected, and also as to other matters that they may consider likely to interest the members of the Association. Communications may be addressed to either of the Secretaries, Mr. E. C. THOMAS, 13, South Square, Gray's Inn, W.C., and Mr. C. WELCH, Corporation Library, Guildhall, E.C., or to the Editor, care of Messrs. TRUBNER & Co., Ludgate Hill, E.C.

The Secretaries will be glad to receive offers of papers to be read at the Monthly Meetings of the Association.

NOVEMBER MONTHLY MEETING.

THE first Monthly Meeting of the fourth year of the Association was held at the London Institution on Friday, November 5, 1880; Mr. R. HARRISON, Treasurer, in the chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting having been read and confirmed, the Chairman called on Mr. E. B. NICHOLSON to read his paper entitled

THE USE OF BUCKRAM, LINOLEUM, AND CRETONNE FOR BINDING.

Mr. NICHOLSON said: The result of my advocacy of buckram as a binding-material at the Conference of Librarians in 1877, has been to bring it into great use, both in this country and in America. Since then I have been driven almost to abandon its use, and I wish to make known the reasons which have led me to do so—adding to those reasons a few remarks on one or two other new materials.

The virtues which in 1877 I claimed for buckram were durability, good looks, and cheapness. As regards its durability, I am still convinced that, if anyone were to bind Chrysoloras's Greek Grammar in buckram, and were able to see it again in five hundred years' time, he would find the material unworn; because, being a linen, it is not disintegrated by any amount of heated air, and because Chrysoloras's Greek Grammar is not a book which is likely to suffer from excessive use. But, if the same person were to bind "Roland Yorke" in buckram, were to place it in a popular lending-library, and were to see it again, not in five hundred years, but in five hundred days, he would very probably find that the corners and the joints of the back were wearing to rags—a fact of which I was unaware in 1877 simply because I had bound no popular books in that material. As regards the good looks of buckram, I am sorry to say that the caution which I then gave against red and green, on account of their tendency to fade, should have been extended to black, blue, purple, and yellow; and that not only all of these, but also brown and slate, lose their glaze altogether, and take stains and spots as badly as the least fast of bookbinders' muslins. Lastly, as regards cheapness, I now find that it is possible to get any book, up to demy quarto, bound as cheap in half-morocco as in buckram, while the difference for demy folios is no more than threepence.

I do not wish for a moment to deny that an atlas folio would cost much less to bind in buckram than in half-morocco, that if it were bound in slate or brown it would not perceptibly fade, and that, if it were hardly ever used, it would keep its glaze, and be a permanently respectable-looking volume. Nor do I see why buckram should not be better glazed, better dyed, and made stouter and cheaper. All I say is, that, until these things come about, it is very far from an ideal material for binding moderate-sized books in common use.

It was suggested to me a few months ago, by one of our binders, that linoleum might be made of a thickness suitable for binding; and in September last one of the members of the London Institution called my attention to a prospectus of the linoleum called "linerusta-Walton," or "muralis," in which it was suggested as a binding-material. I found, on enquiry at a London agent's, that "muralis" was asserted to be damp-proof, heat-proof, acid-proof, and so little liable to fade or rub that it might be cleaned with a scrubbing-brush. Here, I thought, is the promise of an absolutely perfect material, and, on finding that it was made thin enough, I at once had twenty volumes bound in it, some in plain, some in figured muralis, some full-bound, some half-bound. Specimens of these I now show; and I must ask you, in criticising their appearance, to bear in mind the fact that the material has never been manufactured with a view to binding. The plain muralis has only been made in its self-colour, instead of being dyed to such a colour as is usual in bookcovers. The figured is made in patterns suitable for wall-decoration, and the particular pattern which I have chosen, because it was the cheapest, is also only made at present in the

self-colour of the material. Moreover, had it been intended for binding, the pattern should have been in low instead of high relief, to avoid rubbing the binding of the books next to it. Again, in consequence of the pattern being in high relief, the binders have sometimes had to put the lettering-piece much lower down than is at all usual. And, lastly, these books were bound in a great hurry, so as to enable me to take them, if I thought fit, to the meeting at Edinburgh. If you imagine them carefully bound in brown or chocolate muralis, with sunk patterns, and the lettering-piece consequently in its right place, you will, I think, admit that their appearance would be decidedly good.

But muralis will not do as a binding-material. It is so soft that you can pick it to pieces with the greatest ease; and this copy of Liddell and Scott, which has not been in use for three weeks, is, you will see, already cracked down the joints between back and sides. A second fault is, that the unevenness of the material prevents gilding on it, and makes lettering-pieces necessary.

Nevertheless, these experiments make it likely that a linoleum can be made which will be in every way suitable for binding—for the main defect of muralis, its extreme softness, is one in which ordinary linoleum does not share. Whether such a linoleum will be as cheap as durable remains to be seen. The price of full-binding an ordinary octavo in plain muralis is 2s. 8d.; the price of full-binding Liddell and Scott in figured muralis is 3s. 9d.

One other new material may be mentioned. Mr. Bentley has taken to binding his three-volume novels in crêtonnes, exactly the same material as is used for covering drawing-room chairs. Some of the patterns are very pretty, but of course they soil and fade, while the material clearly would not stand much rubbing. At first Mr. Bentley lettered the crêtonne itself, but as it did not take gilt well, or show it well, he now sews a letter-piece on the back.

In a paper of mine which will be printed in the Transactions of the Edinburgh meeting are some remarks on the durability of the different kinds of leather in common use for binding-purposes. I will not duplicate those remarks in the present paper, further than to say that for the combination of durability, good looks, and reasonable cheapness, no material that I know equals half-morocco, unless (as I think possible) time shows equal durability in half-persian. As for russia, calf, and common roan, as they are at present prepared, it were much to be desired, in the interests of libraries, that their use for binding purposes were made a penal offence. No librarian with any knowledge of these leathers, and any regard for the future of his library, will ever think of using them on books which are expected to descend to a new generation.

DISCUSSION.—Mr. WALFORD said that he had tried several experiments, and had come to the conclusion that Manilla paper sides with basil leather backs was about the best kind of binding for ordinary purposes, and much cheaper than ordinary bindings. As to calf, he thought that the acids used in bleaching were a principal

cause of its decay. He thought highly of chintz, but feared that the tendency to cheapness would induce the employment of a bad material.—Mr. FROST had found some old calf bindings much improved by a coating of paste, which they absorbed very freely.—Mr. WELCH regretted that publishers did not sew their books more strongly; many new books with handsome covers soon came to pieces, and had to be rebound long before the cover had suffered any damage.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON INDICATORS.

THIS Committee, consisting of Messrs. ELLIOT, MULLINS, TIMMINS, TONKS, and WRIGHT, issued a series of inquiries to the Free Public Libraries using indicators, and having received replies to the same, presented the following Report, which was adopted at the last Annual Meeting (*see* p. 79):—

REPORT.

The Committee, recognising that the indicator effects a saving of time of both the borrower and the library staff, consider it a useful addition to a lending library.

It appears from the subjoined analysis that some of the libraries make the indicator the sole record of issues, and do not supplement it by any other entry. The Committee are of opinion that as the record afforded by the indicator may be seriously affected by the carelessness or mischief of those who have access to it, it is indispensable, whatever form may be used, that an additional record be kept in a book, or on a series of cards, such as is used in some libraries. If this additional entry be made, it is less necessary to use complicated indicators, and they think the simplest form will be found to be the best. They avoid specifying any particular form, as the merits of each to a certain extent depend on circumstances, and generally the librarian who has to use the indicator can judge which form will best suit his purpose.

ANALYSIS OF ANSWERS TO CIRCULAR OF INQUIRIES.

1. Do you use an indicator to inform your borrowers what books are available for issue, viz., "in" or "out"?
2. What kind of indicator?
3. Whose invention?

Six libraries out of fourteen use Elliott's indicator, Bristol, Leeds, Newcastle, South Shields, Wednesbury, and Wolverhampton; at Wednesbury, one on Elliott's principle with an additional invention by the librarian.

4. Do you make your indicator also a record of your issue, or do you register the issues in a book?

At nine libraries, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Derby, Dundee, Manchester, Plymouth, South Shields, West Bromwich, the issues are registered in a book or on a register card.

At five, Leicester, Leeds, Sheffield, Wednesbury, and Wolverhampton, the indicator is the only record of issue.

5. Do you find that the borrower's card (or the other mode of showing that the book is out) sometimes gets put into the wrong place?

Five libraries, Birmingham, Cardiff, Leicester, Wednesbury, and West Bromwich, find that the borrower's card gets frequently put into the wrong place. Eight libraries, Bristol, Derby, Dundee, Leeds, Newcastle, Plymouth, Sheffield, and South Shields, find that this is rarely the case.

6. If so, what is the average number of mistakes per week, and what means are taken to rectify them?

The average numbers of those misplacements vary from twelve a-day to one a-week, and all agree that searching the indicator will soon enable them to discover them. One library, West Bromwich, keeps no record of mistakes.

7. When the borrower returns his book and wants his card that cannot be found, what do you do?

In three libraries, Birmingham, Plymouth, and West Bromwich, the borrower keeps his own card. Nearly all give duplicate cards in case of misplacement.

8. If the card in the indicator is the only record of the issue, how can you write for books overdue, except by going over the whole of the cards?

9. What is your average issue per day?

The average daily issue of the fourteen libraries is 580.

10. Do you make any entry in the book itself when issued?

Seven libraries, Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester, Newcastle, Plymouth, South Shields, and West Bromwich, make entries in the book itself when issued.

11. If not, how is the question of fine settled, and how is a disputed fine managed?

One library, Manchester, does not fine, but only charges for damage. Four libraries, Cardiff, Leicester, Sheffield, and Wolverhampton, find that fines are very rarely disputed.

12. What advantage in point of time has the entry in the borrower's card over a continuous entry in a book on the desk?

Seven libraries, Derby, Dundee, Leicester, Newcastle, Sheffield, Wednesbury, and Wolverhampton, find a saving of nearly half the time by the entry on the borrower's card.

13. Is it not a disadvantage to have your sole record of issue scattered over some thousand spaces in the indicator?

Six libraries, Derby, Dundee, Newcastle, Plymouth, Sheffield, and Wednesbury, find it no disadvantage to have their sole record of issue scattered over the indicator.

14. Do you not find in practice many wrong entries of numbers, dates, &c., on the borrowers' cards?

In nine libraries, Bristol, Derby, Dundee, Leeds, Leicester, Sheffield, South Shields, Wednesbury, and Wolverhampton,

they do not find many wrong entries on the borrowers' cards.

15. If you issue a work in two or three volumes, and the borrower's card can only indicate one out, how about the other two, especially if the borrower returns Vol. 1 and not Vol. 2 or 3?

In eleven libraries, Bristol, Cardiff, Derby, Dundee, Leeds, Leicester, Plymouth, Sheffield, South Shields, Wednesbury, and Wolverhampton, two and three-volume works are only issued together and taken back together, not separately.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARIES.

At the last annual meeting a resolution was passed calling the attention of the Council to rule 22 of the constitution of this Association, and requesting them to employ means for carrying it into effect.

Rule 22.—In any district containing six members of the Association, a local committee may be formed, with a corresponding secretary. Resolutions and recommendations forwarded by local committees to the Secretaries of the Association shall be laid before its next monthly meeting.

The Council, having considered the subject, have requested the under-named members to act as corresponding secretaries, and have assigned the following districts to them, subject to their consent to undertake the office.

BRIGHTON.—B. Lomax, Librarian, Free Library and Museum, Brighton.

BIRMINGHAM.—C. E. Scarse, Librarian, Birmingham Library, Union Street, Birmingham.

CAMBRIDGE.—Rev. Robert Sinker, Librarian, Trinity College, Cambridge.

DUNDEE.—J. Maclauchlan, Librarian, Free Library and Museum, Dundee.

DURHAM.—Rev. J. T. Fowler, Librarian, University Library, Durham.

EDINBURGH.—T. G. Law, Librarian, Signet Library, Edinburgh.

EXETER.—Rev. H. E. Reynolds, Librarian, Cathedral Library, Exeter.

GLASGOW.—F. T. Barrett, Librarian, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

LEEDS.—T. J. W. MacAlister, Librarian, Leeds.

LINCOLNSHIRE.—Rev. J. C. Hudson, Thornton Vicarage, Horn-castle.

LIVERPOOL.—P. Cowell, Librarian, Free Public Library, Liverpool.

MANCHESTER.—J. Plant, Librarian, Royal Museum and Libraries, Peel Park, Salford.

NEWCASTLE.—W. J. Haggerston, Librarian, Public Libraries, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

NOTTINGHAM.—J. P. Briscoe, Librarian, Free Public Libraries, Nottingham.

OXFORD.—F. Madan, Librarian, Brasenose College, Oxford.

PLYMOUTH.—W. H. K. Wright, Librarian, Free Library, Plymouth.

SOUTHAMPTON.—T. W. Shore, Hartley Institution, Southampton.

STAFFORD.—T. J. De'Mazzinghi, Librarian, William Salt Library, Stafford.

WIGAN.—H. T. Folkard, Librarian, Free Public Library, Wigan.

YORK.—W. M. Morrell, City and County Bank, York.

LIBRARY NOTES.

RONALDS LIBRARY.—This library, which is now in the possession of the Society of Telegraph Engineers, was officially opened on Wednesday, the 10th inst., by the President of the Society, Mr. W. H. Preece, who received the members and a distinguished company of visitors at the rooms of the Society, 4, Broad Sanctuary, Westminster. Mr. Frost, the librarian, exhibited a collection of curious books relating to electricity, magnetism, navigation, &c. A number of interesting letters, autographs, and portraits of eminent electricians were also shown, and the American rapid telegraph was exhibited in action.

DONCASTER.—Mr. Francis H. Darby died at Kirkstall Leas on Saturday, October 23, 1880. Mr. Darby was formerly Librarian of one of the branch libraries at Leeds, and was appointed Librarian of the Doncaster Borough Free Library in September, 1878. During his stay in Doncaster he made many friends by his kind and genial manner. His prospects were very promising, when consumption, which had manifested itself for some time, obliged him to resign his post, and it is with great regret that we chronicle his death at the early age of twenty-nine.

EDINBURGH.—The Meeting of the Library Association at Edinburgh appears to have given a fresh impetus to the Free Library movement in that city. At the recent municipal elections the question was brought up at the ward meetings, and the Edinburgh Trades' Council and other bodies are about to present a requisition to the Lord Provost to convene a public meeting on the subject.

ST. IVES, CORNWALL.—A movement has been begun for the formation of a Free Library at St. Ives, Cornwall. A public meeting was held, at which it was decided not to levy a rate, but to raise a voluntary subscription. The Hon. Secretary of the Committee is Mr. W. Kernick, jun., Market Place, St. Ives, Cornwall.

WEDNESBURY.—Mr. Frederick Wagstaff has been appointed to the Librarianship of the Wednesbury Free Library, in succession to Mr. Cotgreave.

WORCESTER.—Mr. George Reece, for many years Curator of the

Worcestershire Natural History Society's Museum, has been appointed Curator under the new management, the Museum having become the property of the Committee of the Worcester Public Library. Mr. Reece will also be Sub-Librarian.

TASMANIA.—The Tasmanian Public Library in the Town Hall, Hobart Town, is open on Christmas Day, Good Friday, and every Sunday, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.; every other day, including public holidays, from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. (on Saturday, 8 p.m.). The reading-room attached to the library is supplied with the chief English newspapers and periodicals as well as Colonial papers. The official statistics of Tasmania for 1879 give the expenditure for that year at £531 2s. 5d.; the number of volumes at the end of the year, not including bound magazines, 8,208; and the number of visitors during the year, 29,537.

A curious collection was made by the late Mr. Edwin Edwards, the painter, of books written by foreigners about England and Englishmen. They number between three and four hundred volumes, and may be acquired by any like-minded collector, or by any library, for a moderate sum, the present proprietor being mainly desirous of seeing them in safe guardianship as a collection. Particulars may be obtained of Mr. HARRISON, London Library, St. James's Square, S.W.

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne Public Libraries. Catalogue of the Books in the Central Lending Department. Compiled by W. John Haggerston, Chief Librarian, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1880. 8vo, pp. viii., 330. Price One Shilling.

A short-title dictionary catalogue of a general library of about 20,000 volumes. Authors and subjects are arranged in one alphabet, with abundant cross-references. The number of volumes, size, and imprint are not noted. A new and important feature is that the contents of volumes and periodicals are very fully given, and references to articles in magazines and reviews are grouped under the same head with the references to works on the same subjects. The number of references is about 80,000, and the press mark is added to each, so that a book can be called for from any reference.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne Public Libraries. Catalogue of the Books in the Juvenile Lending Department. Compiled by W. John Haggerston, Chief Librarian, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1880. 8vo, pp. viii., 24. Price Twopence.

Containing about 2,000 entries on the same plan as the larger catalogue.

London: TRÜBNER & CO., Ludgate Hill.

Single Numbers, Threepence each. Annual Subscription,
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